United Nations A/59/99–E/2004/83

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 June 2004

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session
Item 12 of the preliminary list*
Report of the Economic and Social Council

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2004
New York, 28 June-23 July 2004
Item 13 of the provisional agenda**
Economic and environmental questions

Implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States

Report of the Secretary-General***

Summary

The present report suggests that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council consider whether the mandated quinquennial review of the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States should be implicit in the overall framework of the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of, and follow-up to, major United Nations conferences and summits, in particular as part of the biennial high-level dialogue to monitor the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

* A/59/50 and Corr.1 and 2.
** E/2004/100 and Corr.1 and 2.
*** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

04-39679 (E) 010704

1. The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States was adopted by the General Assembly in 1974 by a vote of 115 to 6, with 10 abstentions.[1] Article 34 of the Charter called for an item on the Charter to be included in the agenda of the General Assembly at its thirtieth session and thereafter on the agenda of every fifth session. The Assembly subsequently decided to entrust the Economic and Social Council with the task of reviewing the implementation of the Charter with a view to preparing adequately its systematic and comprehensive consideration by the Assembly, as a separate item, as provided in Article 34 of the Charter.[2] In the same resolution, the Assembly also requested the Council to include an item on the Charter in the agenda of its summer sessions in order to discharge that task.

2. The Charter was initiated with a view to improving the functioning of the global economic system and, to this end, seeks to codify a number of principles, rules and norms relating to international economic relations. With globalization and increasing interdependence among countries, the need for multilateral "rules of the game" in various dimensions of economic relations has become increasingly apparent and there have been a wide variety of efforts in this direction. Since the Charter was adopted, the Assembly, the Council and the Trade and Development Board have agreed on a number of major declarations, resolutions and decisions pertaining to issues addressed in the Charter, including the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 35/56, annex), the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (General Assembly resolution 45/199, annex), the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries (General Assembly resolution S-18/3, annex), the Agenda for Development and the outcomes of the quadrennial conferences of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. In 2002, the Assembly adopted the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development. The Monterrey Consensus addresses many of the subjects referred to in the Charter and does so in a holistic and integrated manner. Most of the outcomes have processes for monitoring and follow-up. In particular, the Assembly has agreed to hold a biennial high-level dialogue to monitor implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, the most recent and most comprehensive reflection of the international community's common understanding of the actions necessary in the economic area to advance development.

3. In the light of the foregoing, the Assembly and the Council may wish to consider whether it is necessary to continue abiding by Article 34 of the Charter, which calls for a separate quinquennial review of its implementation. Monitoring progress in the implementation of the Charter may be considered implicit in the overall framework of the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of, and follow-up to, major United Nations conferences and summits, in particular as part of the biennial high-level dialogue to monitor the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

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[1] Resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974.
[2] Resolution 3486 (XXX) of 12 December 1975.